CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1   1.   A method for managing a preference, comprising:

2   receiving a preference over a network associated with an entity

3 during a first transaction with a service;

4   storing the preference in a data store;

5   identifying a second transaction made by the entity for the service;

6   installing the preference on a computing device of the entity; and

7   activating the service, wherein the service automatically uses the

8 preference from the computing device of the entity.

1   2.   The method of claim 1 wherein the installing further includes creating

2 a cookie within a browser, wherein the cookie includes the preference and

3 the service consumes the cookie to acquire the preference.

1   3.   The method of claim 1 wherein the receiving further includes

2 identifying the preference as a search query that is processed by the

3 service.

1   4.   The method of claim 1 wherein the storing further includes storing the

2 preference in an Extensible Markup Language (XML) data format within the

3 data store.

1   5.   The method of claim 4 wherein the installing further includes installing

2 the preference in an XML format on the computing device.

1   6.   The method of claim 1 wherein the identifying further includes

2 detecting a login as the second transaction from the entity to the service and

3 performing the installing immediately after the login is successful.

1 7. The method of claim 1 wherein the processing of the method acts as
2 a front-end interface to the service.

1 8. A preference managing system, comprising:
2 a data store for housing preferences from entities;
3 a service that is accessed by the entities; and
4 a preference manager that records the preferences and associates
5 the preferences with the entities, and wherein the preference manager
6 installs the preferences in locations that are local to the entities and
7 expected by the service prior to the service initializing for access by the
8 entities.

1 9. The preference managing system of claim 8 further comprising
2 browsers that are used by the entities to access the service over the
3 Internet.

1 10. The preference managing system of claim 9 wherein the locations are
2 cookies located in storage locations accessible to the browsers.

1 11. The preference managing system of claim 8 wherein the preference
2 manager is automatically invoked when the entities attempt to access the
3 service for a first time during a transaction.

1 12. The preference managing system of claim 8 wherein the preference
2 manager is invoked by the service to record the preferences during
3 transactions between the service and the entities.

1 13. The preference managing system of claim 8 wherein the preference
2 manager stores the preferences and installs the preferences in Extensible
3 Markup Language (XML) formats.

1   14.   The preference managing system of claim 8 wherein the entities are

2   at least one of electronic representations of users, electronic representations

3   of applications, and electronic representations of applications.

1   15.   A portable preference data structure implemented in a computer-

2   readable medium, comprising:

3   an entity identifier; and

4   preference data;

5   wherein the entity identifier and preference data combine to form a

6   data store preference record for an entity, the record stored externally from

7   an environment of the entity and the preference data automatically

8   transferred and installed in a local environment of the entity when the entity

9   attempts to access a service which consumes the preference data.

1   16.   The portable preference data structure of claim 15 wherein the local

2   environment is a cookie of a browser that is used by the entity to access the

3   service.

1   17.   The portable preference data structure of claim 15 wherein the data

2   structure is managed by a front-end interface associated with the service.

1   18.   The portable preference data structure of claim 15 wherein the

2   preference data is a search query that is processed by the service

3   automatically when the entity logs into the service.

1   19.   The portable preference data structure of claim 15 wherein the

2   preference data includes a series of transactions previously processed with

3   the service by a prior transaction of the entity with the service, and wherein

4   the series of transactions are automatically processed by the service when

5   the entity logs into the service for a new transaction.

1   20.   The portable preference data structure of claim 15 wherein the data

2   structure is in an Extensible Markup Language (XML) format.